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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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21 September 1968

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Approved For Release 2003/06/11 : CIA-RDP79T00975A012100110001-4

Approved For Release 2003/06/11 : CIA-RDP79T00975A012100110001-4

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No. 0267/68
21 September 1968

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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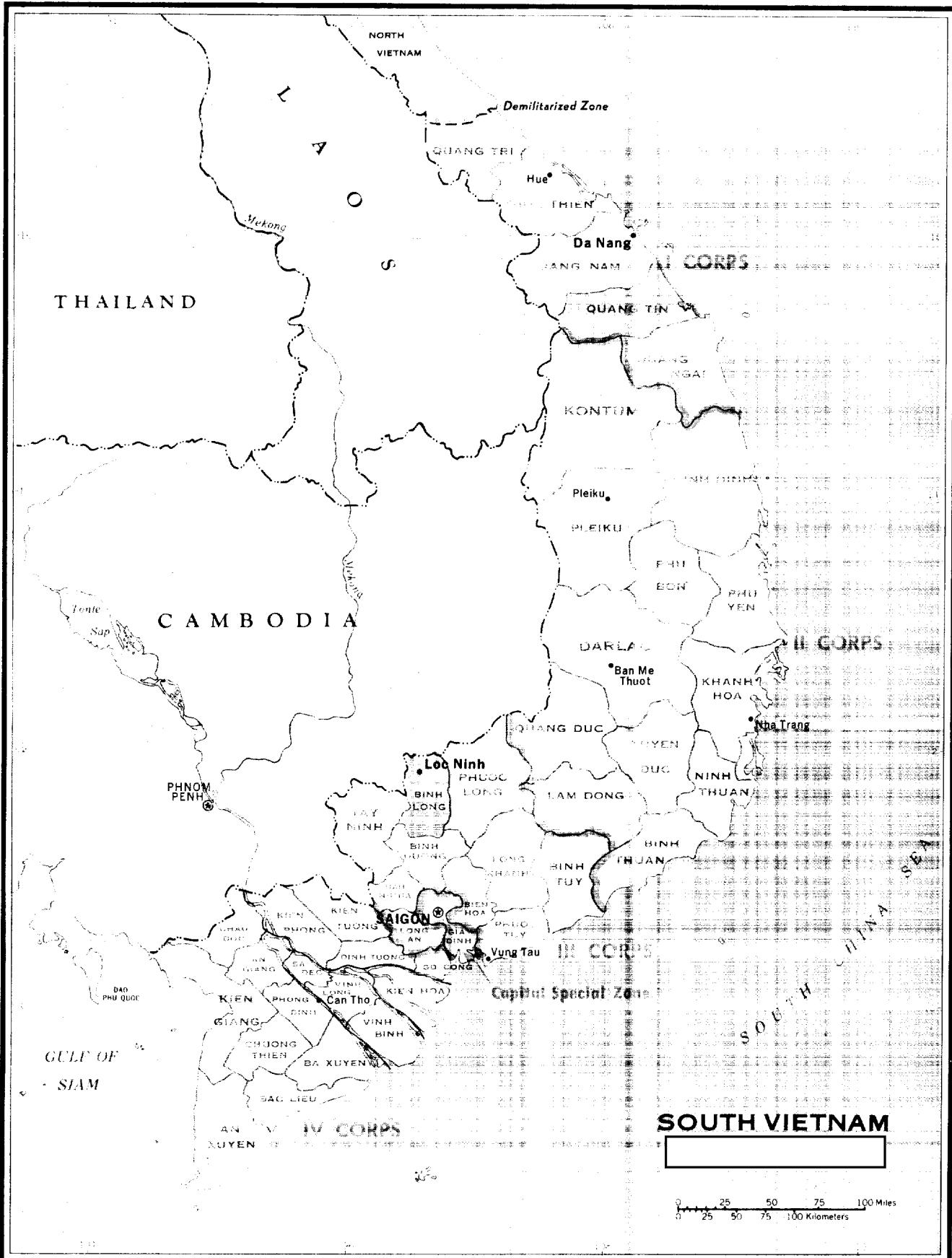
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[South Vietnam: Communist-initiated military activity has picked up in some parts of the country, especially in the provinces north and northwest of Saigon.

Enemy forces kept up their pressure in that area through numerous shellings and small-scale ground probes against isolated allied positions. A small enemy force penetrated the town of Loc Ninh in Binh Long Province on 20 September. The attack was repulsed with only light casualties to the South Vietnamese defenders.

In the northern provinces, a US Marine sweep south of Da Nang touched off a half-day battle on 19 September in which the Marines took relatively heavy casualties. Smaller skirmishes occurred near the Demilitarized Zone and in eastern Quang Tin Province.

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In the political war, [redacted]

[redacted] enemy propaganda claims of a vigorous effort under way to extend a new Communist administrative apparatus over much of South Vietnam. There is a growing volume of evidence that so-called "revolutionary administrations" have been established through carefully supervised elections or simply by Communist fiat. The campaign is accompanied by stepped-up Communist violence designed to weaken the local leadership capabilities of the Saigon government. Assassinations of South Vietnamese functionaries have grown markedly this year and appear to be on the rise throughout the country.

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One aim of the new administrations is to help mobilize Communist resources behind the current war effort. The Communists clearly are looking beyond this immediate objective, however. They expect this apparatus to strengthen their claims of territorial control both at the negotiations table and in a post-war period. [redacted]

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Czechoslovakia-USSR: There appears to be growing disagreement between the Czechoslovaks and the Soviets over the implementation of the Moscow agreement.

The Russians are said to have a list of Czechoslovak officials they want removed, but the Dubcek leadership has reportedly refused to accept it. Instead, the Czechoslovaks have counterbalanced "resignations" of liberal leaders by ousting conservative officials favored by Moscow. In addition, the party leadership has "recommended" the resignation of all those--even at lower levels--who no longer "enjoy the confidence of the people" and who are tied to the "pre-January sectarian policy." Many of these individuals are old friends of Moscow.

Prague has announced the "temporary" postponement of some economic reforms, which have been attacked by the Soviet press. The word "temporary" is clearly intended to put the onus on the Soviets. Prague has also stated that nonparty people will share in the management of "social, economic and other processes," a move that is sure to arouse Moscow, which insists that the Communist Party increase its control.

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The Czechoslovak Defense Ministry announced on 18 September that a contingent of draftees will begin military service between the first and fourth of October. The size of the contingent was not specified. Earlier reports that the 1968 call-up had been indefinitely postponed apparently were erroneous.

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France: Elections will be held tomorrow to fill one third of the seats in the Senate, the upper house of the French parliament.

The political significance of the elections is limited because senators are chosen by an electoral college composed of municipal and departmental officials and deputies to the National Assembly. The composition of the 283-seat body tends to be stable because most members are firmly entrenched in local positions. Senators have been elected in the past for nine-year terms. The length of the new terms is uncertain, given the government's plan to merge the Senate with the advisory Economic and Social Council.

The Senate, whose actions can be overruled by the National Assembly, can only delay legislation and thus plays no significant role. The government justified its decision to "reform" the Senate by citing the need for wider representation and a greater degree of participation of local and regional interests. Another factor, however, was that the orthodox Gaullist party has never held even ten percent of the Senate seats--in contrast with the Assembly where it has a massive majority. The long-time reign of a critic of De Gaulle, Gaston Monnerville, as Senate president may also have been a factor.

Under the present constitutional provisions Monnerville, who has bitterly and publicly attacked the regime, would act as interim president of the Republic until new elections could be held in the event of the death or disability of the President.

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India-USSR: An Indian team will depart for Moscow on 22 September to discuss economic matters with the Soviet planning organization.

Talks will likely center on ways in which Indian industrial production for export to the USSR can be more closely coordinated with Soviet requirements. The USSR has been seeking ways to expand its trade with India, but wants to promote a balanced growth in trade in order to avoid the accumulation of large rupee balances.

As part of an effort to achieve this balance, Premier Kosygin agreed during his visit to New Delhi last January that the Soviets would increase purchases from India's depressed, public-owned, heavy industry sector. Moscow has already contracted for delivery of some \$50 million worth of Indian steel over the next three years. Next year the USSR will make the first of several planned annual purchases of Indian rail cars, which may ultimately total as much as \$600 million.

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NOTES

USSR: The Soviet helicopter carrier Moskva entered the Mediterranean early yesterday. Two Soviet guided-missile frigates passed through the Bosphorus with the carrier. The three ships probably will join the Soviet Mediterranean squadron. [redacted]

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Bolivia: Student violence in Cochabamba, where army troops raided the university on 17 September, now appears better organized and more frequently directed at US targets. [redacted]

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[redacted] The US Consulate and the binational center were stoned earlier this week by small groups of students. [redacted]

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Portugal: Widespread recognition of the seriousness of Salazar's condition has increased political maneuvering for the position of prime minister. Although Marcelo Caetano has apparently been offered the job, disagreements over the composition of his cabinet may prevent his being designated. Other candidates reportedly still aspiring to the position include army Brigadier Kaulza de Arriaga, chief of the Atomic Energy Board; Foreign Minister Alberto Franco Nogueira; Professor Antunes Varela, former justice minister; and Adriano Moreira, former overseas minister. [redacted]

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